

nature net

The Nature Kenya Newsletter

www.naturekenya.org

May 04

East Africa Natural History Society 94th Annual General Meeting & Members Evening Get-together

Thu 13 May '04, 4:00 p.m.
Louis Leakey Hall, Museum, Nairobi

NATURALIST CORNER

An Unusual Wednesday Morning Bird-walk

Faridah Noor

The Wednesday bird-walk of February 18, 2004, would provide a most unusual drama. Fleur Ng'weno, the leader of the walk organized by Nature Kenya, suggested we visit the area adjacent to the Carnivore Restaurant and Nairobi National Park so we could also check out the wild flowers that would have emerged due to the unseasonal rains that Nairobi had been experiencing. The hillside is generally dry, but the rocky terrain allows the formation of temporary pools during the rains - supporting all kinds of plants and animals.

In an hour and a half, we had already recorded more than 47 bird species, several of them migrants. We observed with delight the beauty of the wild flowers, while Fleur enlightened us with the botanical names and characteristics of the plants. In a temporary rock pool we came upon 'fairy shrimps' - crustaceans that emerge from dormancy during the rains. These crustaceans live, breed and lay their eggs in a brief season. The eggs lie dormant during the dry season till the next rainfall. We noted various colourful dragonflies.

Continued on page 4

This really is your opportunity to get closer to Nature Kenya. Meet other members, representatives from committees and projects, field and office staff, Executive Committee members, volunteers: they are all there, ready to help you with your queries, to tell you more about Nature Kenya and its work.

Programme

4:00 p.m. Tea/Coffee

(You are welcome to contribute to the tea table - thank you!)

4:30 p.m. Convene in Hall

Agenda

... Minutes of the 93rd AGM

... Matters arising from the minutes

... Chairman's Report

... Honorary Treasurer's Report

... Appointment of Honorary Auditor

... Launch of Museum Bird List

... Committees and Projects Presentations

... Any other business of which due notice in the form of the Resolution to be proposed has been given to the Honorary Secretary, signed by not less than 2 members, not less than 21 days before the date of the meeting

... Election of office bearers and Trustees

Evening Get-together

6:00 p.m. Barbeque & cash bar

Proposed Subscription Rates

Full	1000	Single
Sponsor	3000*	
Family	1500	
Student	500	Full time & Undergraduates
Pensioners	500	Long-standing members
Institutional	1000*	Libraries, schools, clubs
Corporate	9000	
Corporate Plus	20000	Companies, businesses, institutions

* No change from previous rate

Notice is here given for proposals for inclusion, repeal, and addition in the EANHS Constitution; and for new subscription rates

For Constitution (draft text):

Trustees

(a) All land, buildings and other immovable property and all investment as securities that shall be acquired by the Society shall be vested in the names of not less than three Trustees who shall be members of the Society and shall be appointed at a General Meeting for a period of one year. The Trustees will be drawn from among the office-bearers and members of the Executive Committee elected at each Annual General Meeting (AGM). On retirement, such Trustees shall be eligible for re-election. A General Meeting shall have the power to remove any of the Trustees and all vacancies occurring by removal, resignation or death shall be filled at the same or next General Meeting.

(b) The Trustees shall pay all income received from property vested in the Trustees to the Treasurer. Any expenditure in respect of such property, which in the opinion of the Trustees, is necessary or desirable shall be reported by the Trustees to the Executive Committee, which shall authorize the expenditure of such moneys as it thinks fit.

Section V Subscriptions Repeal

'2) Any Member who joins after 30 June in any year shall pay only half the subscription for that year and shall thereafter be entitled to all relevant privileges and publications.'

Section III Headquarters Add

'Nature Kenya is the East Africa Natural History Society in Kenya. Nature Uganda is the East Africa Natural History Society in Uganda.'

NEWS UPDATE!

Forest Policy 2004

The draft Forest Policy 2004 is now in its final stages of revision.

Its broad objective is to increase the forest and tree cover in the country. The new Forest Policy will guide the development of farm forestry, dry-land forestry, private sector and community involvement and management and reforms in the management of forest resources.

Watch future issues of *Nature net* for more details!

Trees for Sale!

40,000 seedlings are ready for planting:
Grevillea robusta (Mikima)
Eucalyptus saligna (Blue Gum)
Cassuarina (Whistling pine)
Cupressus lusitanica (Cypress)

Potted @ 10/- each

Bare rooted @ 5/- each

Available from Kereita Forest Station
Contact Julius Kimani 0722 220868
or Peter Manji 0722 291679
email keenvo@yahoo.com

Indigenous tree seedlings (mainly *Prunus africana*) also available

IN THE MAIL

There are some intriguing news items sent by email. Here is one -

Flying for the Environment in Africa

A well known conservationist from the World Conservation Society, will be doing a 600 hour, low level aerial transect across Africa transversing every major eco-region on the continent to identify places that are still ecologically intact.

Bateleurs, a non profit organisation that flies for the environment, will provide support. Bateleurs is requesting your support in this by recommending places you consider to be the wildest place in different eco-regions. They are also going to need a whole lot of local assistance.

For more information visit their website www.bateleurs.org where you can also complete a questionnaire or e-mail pete@ecoassist.co.za



EVENING SKY

By Ian MacKay and Fleur Ng'weno

Moon, May 04

May 4th - Full Moon - Lunar Eclipse!

The sun and earth and our moon are aligned on May 4th - resulting in a lunar eclipse. The shadow of the earth will slowly sweep across the surface of the moon. The eclipse starts at 9:50 p.m. and lasts for about an hour. In southern Africa it will be a total eclipse, however it will not be total here.

May 11 Last Quarter; May 19 New Moon;
May 27 First Quarter

May Stars

The constellation of Hydra, the Water Snake, reaches far across the sky, just south of overhead. Hydra contains the longest string of stars in any constellation. About halfway along Hydra, a group of stars form a cup shape. This constellation is called Crater. Next to it are four stars in the constellation Corvus, the Crow.

Crux, the Southern Cross, is low in the southern sky. There are two very bright stars to the left (east) of the Southern Cross. They are part of the constellation Centaurus, the Centaur. Rigel Kentaurus (also known as Alpha Centauri) in Centaurus is our nearest stellar neighbour, at about 4.3 light years away.

The head of the constellation Scorpius is rising in the east. The bright reddish giant star Antares, the eye of Scorpius, is just south of the moon on the 6th.

Planets, May 04

The planets Venus, Mars and Saturn are close together in the northwest, over the sunset. On May 9th they line up in a near perfect row. Venus is at its brightest on May 2nd. On the 22nd, it is near the horizon and close to the moon in the evening twilight.

Mars is midway between Venus and Saturn

on May 9th. At the end of the month, Mars and Saturn are very close together in the constellation of Gemini. Saturn is the brighter, larger object and has a more orange colored glow.

Jupiter is also shining brightly, in isolation in the eastern sky, almost overhead. It is very large and easy to find. The satellites of Jupiter are fun to watch though binoculars! (The magnification factor is far less important than simply using binoculars with large lenses. The larger the lenses the more light can be gathered. Of course lens power helps, but if the magnification is too high the image will just be hard to keep steady).

Hydra, Corvus and Crater

A story from ancient Greece
The Greek God Apollo once sent a raven to fetch him a cup of water from a fountain same distance away. The raven flew at once to the fountain, but seeing a luscious fig tree just putting forth its fruit, he could not resist the temptation to wait for the fruit to ripen. So he stayed, waiting comfortably among the shady leaves of the fig tree until the fruit was fully ripe and he had sapped it all. He then prepared to return to Apollo - with the cup full of water - but suffering from a guilty conscience and realizing his very late arrival would not go unnoticed he returned with a water snake in his claws, which he had seized beside the fountain. He explained to his master that the creature had attacked him and was therefore the cause of his delay.

Being wise and all-seeing, Apollo naturally knew this far the lie it was. In his anger he placed all three of them, the raven, the snake, and also the cup full of water, among the stars, carefully arranged so the serpent keeps guard over the cup of water and the poor raven, try as he might, can never get near enough to rescue his thirst. And that is why, of all the birds, the raven does not carry water to his fledglings.

REGULAR ACTIVITIES

SUNDAY BIRDWATCH

Members meet at the National Museum, Nairobi car park at 9:00 a.m. the third Sunday of every month, i.e. **16 May**. The members decide where to go. Bring lunch

TREE WALK

Guided Tree Walks in the Arboretum on the second Saturday and last Monday, i.e. **8 & 31 May from 9:30 a.m.** Meet at the Arboretum gate. Those who are not members of FONA or Nature Kenya pay Ksh 100/- fee on arrival at the gate.

WEDNESDAY MORNING BIRDWALKS

Bird watching walks at sites in and around Nairobi. Meet at the National Museum car park every Wednesday at 8:45 a.m. Return about 12:30 p.m. Those who are not members can get temporary membership at Ksh 100 per birdwalk, payable on arrival at the car park.

ARABUKO-SOKOKE (COAST)

The Saturday birdwatch with the Arabuko Sokoke Forest Guides Association is on the first Saturday of each month i.e. **1 May, at 6:30 a.m.** from the Visitor Centre, Gede. Cost 100/- per person. KWS fees may now apply (100/- Citizens, 500/- Residents)

FFJ Bird Walk (Coast)

Friends of Fort Jesus birdwalks are held the third Saturday of each month, i.e. **15 May** Please call Marlene Reid on (041) 491 648 to confirm

Ngong Road Forest Walks (Nairobi)

The Ngong Road Forest Sanctuary Trust Nature walks are held on the first and third Saturdays of the month i.e. **1 & 15 May, at 9:00 a.m.** Meet at the stairs leading to the Restaurant at the Racecourse.

Lake Victoria Sunset Birders (Kisumu)

The Lake Victoria Sunset Birders are a Nature Kenya Site Support Group and organise bird walks at sites in and around Kisumu every Friday of the month. For further details call 035 42952 or email wck@vicweb.net

DECLARATION

Nature Kenya does not accept any responsibility whatsoever in respect of negligence of any of its staff, volunteers or members organising the outings/trips or for any loss, injury, death or damage to property.

Editor, Catherine Ngarachu

ABSORBER ... THE SOLUTION FOR DROUGHT CONDITIONS

WATER RETAINERS FOR SOIL AND SUBSTRATES

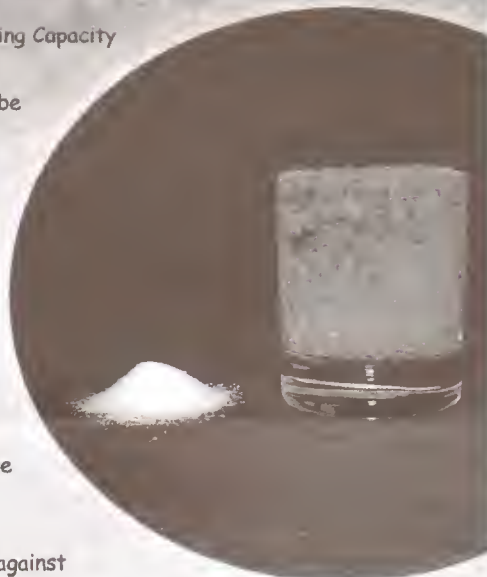
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Mammal Sighting 3749957

Striped Ground Squirrel, two running across the track, Karura Forest edge near Shell-BP Sports Club 3 March 2004

Bird Records

* 3 Eurasian Nightjars and few Grey-rumped Swallows at Ruiru Sports Club seen by Wed' mar. Bird Walk 24/03/04.

* 'Nairobi Pipit' and Bar-throated Apalis on the Chyulu Hills seen by Brian Finch, Quentin and Patricia Luke 26-28/03/04.

* Eurasian Nightjars at Splash grounds seen by Wed' mor. Bird Walk 31/03/04.

* dark morph Eurasian Honey Buzzard, 60 Forbe's-Watsons Swifts, Callared Palm Thrushes, Brown Naddy around Shimani seen by Brian Finch, Richard and Ann Bishop, Siman Vale and John Hornbuckle 3-4/04/04.

* 1000 Madagascar Pratincoles, one Rufous Bush Chat, Bare-eyed Thrush at Sabaki River mouth seen by Brian Finch, Richard and Ann Bishop, Siman Vale and John Hornbuckle 6/04/04.

CLASSIFIEDS

CAMPFIRE IN THE BUSH

Hiking and camping in Kajiado
15th - 16th May 2004

Cost 2,700 pp (res) 3,500 pp (non-res)
(includes transport and meals)

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Under Open Sky Adventures
0733-783319 or 020-2734079
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Email: othach@yahoo.co.uk

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BirdLife International

CONSERVATION ACHIEVEMENT AWARD 2004

Awarded to

David Ngala

At the World Conservation Conference and Global Partnership Meeting
by BirdLife International Council
9 March 2004

Gérard A. Bertrand
Gérard A. Bertrand
Chair of Council

A.P. Leventis
A.P. Leventis
Treasurer

David Ngala receives Award at the BirdLife World Conservation Conference

Ngala is an outstanding personality in the conservation of Arabuko-Sokoke Forest. He grew up near it, worked in it as a driver for the Forest Department, studied its birds, and worked tirelessly for its preservation. Among his many contributions is the establishment of the Arabuko Sokoke Forest Guides Association and the Forest-Adjacent Dwellers Association (FADA), a local support group.

Naturalist's Corner, from page 1

During our walk we also observed workers digging across the fence inside the national park. No ranger was in sight! The men were 10 meters from the fence in the tall grass. In jest I mentioned that we should watch for drama in case the lions got them.

Half an hour later as we walked uphill we saw two lions in the park. They were moving from Hyena Dam in our direction. Then they turned and seemed to head in the direction of the workers. We could see the lions clearly as we all had binoculars and the grassland of the park was at a lower elevation than we were, allowing a panoramic view. We also

guessed that the workers, who were on the same level as the lions, would not have seen the approaching cats, as the grass probably obscured their view.

We decided to send two volunteers to run down the hill and warn the men. It seemed like an eternity before they were close enough to call out to the workers. As we watched, one man sitting on the dirt track seemed to react to the call and ran to join his friends who were digging. We were concerned that these men get to safety, so no harm would come to them or the lions. While we waited, a Moasai herdsman climbed onto the fence to call the men, but still they didn't move. Finally, as the

lions neared and came into their view, they scrambled fast through the fence and out of the park. On seeing the men escape to the other side of the park fence, the lions turned around and headed back towards Hyena dam.

We didn't have any cameras with us, but I have a photo (front page) of hungry lions in Nairobi National Park taken at this time last year. Wednesday's pair looked much healthier than those, but we hope they haven't been fattening themselves on itinerant workers labouring unguarded on the other side of the fence!

Nature Kenya**Membership form****Yes!**☐ **Start**☐ **Renew**

my Nature Kenya membership

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(OPTIONAL - but useful to us in planning)

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Age Bracket (tick) under 21() 21-35() 36-50() over 50()

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Recpt Date

MEMBERSHIP TYPE**Ksh Per Year****Enter Amount**

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Free of charge

Journal of E.A. Natural History

1000

Scopus (Ornithological Journal)

500

World Birdwatch

(the BirdLife International magazine)

1500

Succulenta East Africa

400

Friends of Nairobi Arboretum

Single - 400/-, Student - 250/-, School or Club - 800/-

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5000/ 8000/ Other

TotalIf you live outside of Kenya please refer to www.naturekenya.org